(b) The original sanctioned cost of the Project was Rs. 1262.97 crores (at October, 1988 price level). After withdrawal of the French Civil contractor (M/s DSB), NHPC took over the plant and machinery of the DSB and the civil works were taken up departmentally with a view to completing the balance civil works. NHPC has awarded the contract to a new civil contractor (a Consortium of Indian and Norwegian firms) in March 1997. The required funds for completion of the project will be provided. In dam area 96% excavation and 25% concreting have been completed. In the 10.6 k.m. long underground head race tunnel 35.8% excavation has been completed. In underground power house area, excavation of power house cavern and transformer gallery is almost complete. The progress of supsply of electrical, mechanical and hydro mechanical equipments is 93%. Other works are also progressing satisfactorily.

(c) and (d) There has been a delay in execution of the project which was originally to be completed in July, 1994. However, work on the project was suspended in August 1992 by the French consortium due to the alleged disturbed security environment. The revised cost of the project is Rs. 3559.77 cores (at November 1996 price level). The estimated time schedule for completion ofthe project is March, 2001.

NTPC Dues on State Electricity Boards

279. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a huge amount of dues from State Electricity Boards remains unpaid to NTPC and, if so, the quantum thereof;

(b) whether this has advesely affected the functioning of NTPC and created problems for it; and

(c) whether any steps have been taken for better realisation of dues form S.E.Bs. if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The amount of dues from State Electricity Boards (SEBs) unpaid to NTPC as on 31.10.1997 stands at Rs. 3997.65 crores plus a surcharge of Rs. 2434.88 crores.

(b) The low level of payments from SEBs has affected NTPC's ability to make timely payment to coal suppliers, oil companies, and suppliers of other inputs required for maintaining generation.

(c) The matter relating to recovery of outstanding dues is being consistently followed up by NTPC with the defaulting States/SEBs. In case of large defaulters, the power supply is also sometimes regulated. NTPC has also introduced a special incentive scheme for prompt payment by SEBs. It has also been decided that supply of power heanceforthwith, would only be against advance payments or opening of irrevocable Letters of Credit. Government of India has also been facilitating NTPC to recover its dues from States through adjustments from devolutions from the Centre to the States.

बिहार में मगा थर्मल पावर स्टेशन की स्थापना

280. **श्री नागमणि**: क्या विद्युत मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार बिहार में मेगा थर्मल पावर स्टेशन स्थापित करने का विचार रखती है,

(ख) अगर हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है, और

(ग) सरकार ने इस दिशा में क्या प्रयास किए हैं और उनके क्या परिणाम रहे?

विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री तथा विद्युत मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री योगेन्द्र कुमार भगतराम अलघ): (क) जी हां,